

In the Drawings:

Attached is a replacement sheet of Figure 1, deleting reference numeral 2k.

Remarks

Request for Reconsideration

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action, but remain of the position that patentable subject matter is present. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the attached replacement sheets, the amendments to the specification, the amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1-11 are pending.

Drawing Objections

Figure 1 had been objected to because groove 2k is annular.

Figure 1 has been amended to delete reference character 2k. It is noted that groove 2k, described in the specification as annular, is shown in Figure 2 and discussed in the specification on page 13 in that context.

Specification Objections

The specification had been objected to because there was no brief description of the drawings.

Page 10 has been amended to include a “Brief Description of the Drawings.”

Allowed / Allowable Claims

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner’s allowance of claims 8 – 11, as well as indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4 - 6.

Rejection 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim 1 has been amended to obviate this rejection and claims 5 and 6 have been amended so that they now depend from claim 4.

Claim 4 was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form, which it has.

Rejection 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Niwa, *et al.* U.S. 2005/0018939.

It is respectfully noted that the instant application was a 371 of PCT/DE2004/002676 filed December 6, 2004, which in turn claimed the priority of DE 103 59 644.5, filed on December 18, 2003. The earliest date on the face of the Niwa, *et al.* publication is its filing date of July 26, 2004. Thus, if applicants perfect their priority claim, Niwa et al is not prior art.

In order to perfect Applicants' claim of priority attached hereto is a certified English translation of the German '644 application. It will be noted that the German priority application is virtually identical to the U.S. application. Therefore, it is submitted that the German priority document clearly supports the U.S. claims.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any extensions of time or fees be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit Account # 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,

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